

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 /074 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4067
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PINT, AR, CI
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA TO REJECT BEAGLE CHANNEL RULING;
NAVY BEGINS MANEUVERS

REF: 77 BUENOS AIRES 9107

SUMMARY: THE ARGENTINE PRESS HAS ANNOUNCED THE
ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO REJECT THE
BEAGLE CHANNEL RULING AND TO MAKE ITS DECISION
KNOWN OFFICIALLY BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH.
MEANWHILE ADMIRAL MASSERA WILL REPORTEDLY BOARD
THE ARGENTINE AIRCRAFT CARRIER "25 DE MAYO" TODAY
(JANUARY 10) FROM WHICH HE WILL PARTICIPATE IN
NAVAL MANEUVERS AND TRAINING EXERCISES BEING HELD
OFF THE ARGENTINE COAST. FIFTH ARMY CORPS
COMMANDER VAQUERO HAS INITIATED AN INSPECTION
TOUR OF SOUTHERN ARGENTINE ARMY BASES. ALTHOUGH
ARGENTINE OFFICIALS ARE MAINTAINING AN OFFICIAL SILENCE ON THE
BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE, THE NAVY MOVEMENTS AND ENERGETIC
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PRESS CAMPAIGN REPUDIATING THE RULING ARE INVARIABLY SEEN HERE
AS AN INDIRECT SHOW-OF-FORCE WARNING TO CHILE. WAR BETWEEN
THE TWO COUNTRIES IS DISCOUNTED BY MOST OBSERVERS, BUT
RUMORS ABOUND THAT ARGENTINA MAY OCCUPY SOME OF THE SMALLER
UNINHABITED ISLANDS EAST OF CAPE HORN BEFORE THE END OF THE
MONTH. END SUMMARY.

1. THE LOCAL PRESS HAS ANNOUNCED THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO REJECT THE BEAGLE CHANNEL RULING. CLARIN TODAY (JANUARY 10) REPORTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE PUBLIC A DECLARATION REJECTING THE RULING TWO DAYS AFTER PRESIDENT VIDELA RETURNS FROM HIS VACATION, WHICH IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 23. AT THE SAME TIME, ARGENTINA WILL RENEW ITS INVITATION TO CHILE TO RESUME BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF SOUTHERN ATLANTIC SEA BOUNDARIES. CLARIN ALSO SAID THAT GOA IS PREPARING AN INFORMATION CAMPAIGN FOR BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL USE WHICH WILL SET FORTH ARGENTINA'S REASONS FOR REJECTING THE RULING. ACCORDING TO A COMPILATION OF REPORTS, ARGENTINA IS FORCED TO TAKE THE UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF REJECTING AN INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT BECAUSE OF THE ERRORS COMMITTED BY THE ARBITRATION JUDGES AND THE INTRANSIGENT ATTITUDE OF CHILE IN REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE A BILATERAL SETTLEMENT. THE JUDGES ARE ACCUSED OF OVERSTEPPING THEIR JURISDICTION IN RULING ON AREAS NOT SUBMITTED FOR ARBITRATION AND OF REJECTING OR IGNORING ARGENTINA'S VALID HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL ARGUMENTS AND THE BILATERAL TREATIES WHICH GRANT ARGENTINA SOVEREIGNTY IN THE ATLANTIC AND CHILE IN THE PACIFIC. CHILE IS CRITICIZED FOR REBUFFING ARGENTINE EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTED SEA BOUNDARIES IN GOOD FAITH THROUGH BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

2. THE ARGENTINE VOICES URGING THE GOVERNMENT TO REJECT THE RULING ARE BUILDING TO A CRESCENDO IN LOCAL PRESS ACCOUNTS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORMER PRESIDENT LEVINGSTON TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCUSE FORMER PRESIDENT LANUSSE OF COMMITTING "AN UNPARDONABLE ERROR" IN ALLOWING THE DISPUTE TO BE SUBMITTED TO ARBITRATION AND DECLARED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST REJECT THE RULING IN ORDER TO PRESERVE NATIONAL INTEGRITY. DESPITE REPORTS THAT CHILE WILL APPEAL TO THE WORLD COURT SHOULD ARGENTINA REJECT THE RULING, ARGENTINA HAS APPARENTLY MEASURED THE COST OF REJECTION AND DETERMINED THAT CHILE LACKS SUFFICIENT INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO CAUSE MUCH DAMAGE TO ARGENTINE PRESTIGE. A LA OPINION COLUMNIST ON JANUARY 7 NOTED CHILE'S RECENT CONDEMNATION BY THE UN, THE USG'S CENSURE OF CHILE'S JANUARY 4 PLEBISCITE, EUROPEAN AND THIRD WORLD CRITICISM AND AVOIDANCE OF CHILE, AND CHILE'S PROBLEMS WITH BOLIVIA AND PERU TO CONCLUDE THAT CHILE WOULD HAVE LITTLE LUCK IN OBTAINING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ITS POSITION IN THE OAS OR OTHER MULTILATERAL FORA. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED A URUGUAYAN NEWSPAPER'S EDITORIAL DEFENSE OF ARGENTINA AND OBSERVED THAT ARGENTINA'S SOLID RELATIONS WITH URUGUAY AND INVOLVEMENT WITH PARAGUAY AND EVEN BRAZIL (THROUGH TRANSPORT AND HYDROELECTRIC POWER PROJECTS) WOULD KEEP THOSE COUNTRIES ON ARGENTINA'S SIDE IN CASE OF FURTHER INTERNATIONALIZING OF THE DISPUTE.

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3. IN THE MEANTIME, WHILE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT CHILE AND BUILD UP FERVOR FOR ARGENTINA'S POSITION IS AGAIN FULLY UNDERWAY (THE STRIDENT PRESS REPORTS HAVING SUBSIDED SOMEWHAT DURING THE BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS LAST MONTH), THE MILITARY IS ALSO BACK TO WAVING THE "BIG STICK". ADMIRAL MASSERA CONCLUDED ON JANUARY 7 AN INSPECTION OF THE MAR DEL PLATA NAVAL BASE DURING WHICH HE DECLARED THE NAVY IS "FULLY PREPARED TO FULFILL THE TASK GIVEN IT BY THE MOTHER COUNTRY, WHICH IS TO DEFEND WHAT IS OURS". MASSERA IS SCHEDULED TO BOARD THE ARGENTINE AIRCRAFT CARRIER "25 DE MAYO" TODAY FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD TO OBSERVE NAVAL MANEUVERS CURRENTLY BEING HELD OFF THE ARGENTINE COAST. THE ARGENTINE "FLEET" WAS REPORTEDLY ORDERED OUT FROM PUERTO BELGRANO TO PARTAKE IN THE EXERCISES. THE MANUEVERS ARE REPORTEDLY TRAINING EXERCISES AND WILL INCLUDE THE PARTICIPATION OF WARSHIPS, SUBMARINES, NAVAL AIR UNITS AND MARINE INFANTRY FORCES. THE EXERCISES, ACCORDING TO SOME OBSERVERS, WILL CULMINATE IN A NAVAL REVIEW TO TAKE PLACE JUST OFF OF MAR DEL PLATA, ARGENTINA'S MAJOR BEACH RESORT WHICH IS CURRENTLY PACKED ARGENTINE AND FOREIGN VACATIONERS. IT WAS ALSO REPORTED THAT FIFTH ARMY CORPS COMMANDER VAQUERO LEFT TODAY FOR AN

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INSPECTION OF BASES UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE TENTH
INFANTRY BRIGADE WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTIRE SOUTHERN SECTION
OF ARGENTINA.

4. COMMENT: THE MILITARY MANEUVERS AND INSPECTIONS, REGARDLESS
OF HOW ROUTINE THEY MAY BE, NEVERTHELESS ARE VIEWED HERE AS A
CLEAR WARNING TO CHILE THAT ARGENTINA WILL BE PREPARED TO
ASSERT ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER AREAS DISPUTED IN THE BEAGLE
CHANNEL ISSUE. RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING THAT THE ARGENTINE
MILITARY MAY DECIDE TO OCCUPY SOME OF THE SMALLER, UNINHABITED
ISLANDS IN THE DISPUTED AREA, POSSIBLY THE BARNEVELT AND
EVOUT ISLANDS, IN LATE JANUARY IN ORDER TO FORCE THE ARGENTINE
CLAIM EAST OF CAPE HORN. DESPITE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS FROM BOTH
ARGENTINE AND CHILEAN OFFICIALS THAT NEGOTIATION REMAINS THE
PREFERRED WAY TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE AND THE NEITHER
COUNTRY WANTS WAR, SOME OBSERVERS HERE DO NOT WRITE OFF THE
POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED TENSIONS AND CONFLICT IN
THE SOUTH. END COMMENT.
CASTRO

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